

From the Consul's Desk: Wait Time For Visa Appointments Remains Under A Week

The Consulate General is glad to report that the wait time for visa appointments remains under a week. Our normal standard is two days. The time crept up a bit, during the transition to the new DS-160 online application form, but we expect very soon to get the wait time back down to two days. Travellers are advised to plan ahead and apply for visas early in case of processing delays, and not to buy non-refundable travel tickets until they have their visas in hand. For full official information on U.S. visas, visit <http://chennai.usconsulate.gov/visas.html>.

My brother, a green card holder in the U.S., will be sponsoring me and my daughter on tourist visa. Please let me know about the newly introduced DS-160 form. What is the minimum bank balance my sponsor should have for my sponsorship? Should I and my daughter apply in separate forms or can we use the same form?

The transition to the online DS-160 application process has gone well. The DS-160 process is more streamlined, offers advantages for families applying together who only need to fill out one form, and, because it is paperless, the DS-160 has reduced our impact on the environment. You may find detailed information on how to apply for a U.S. visa using the DS-160 on our website: <http://chennai.usconsulate.gov/howtoapply.html>.

There is no requirement of sponsorship for a tourist visa, nor is there any requirement that the person you are visiting possess a bank balance. A visitor visa applicant needs to establish that s/he has a residence outside the United States which s/he does not intend to abandon, is coming to the United States for a temporary period, and has sufficient funds to cover the expenses associated with the visit. Since you intend to visit your brother, it may be helpful for the consular officer if you bring along a letter from your brother explaining what his plans are for your visit.

Every applicant needs to have a separate HDFC Bank receipt. If you are applying together, you may use the family option while completing the DS-160 form, allowing both of you to receive the same appointment date and time and complete the DS-160 process only once.

My niece (an Indian citizen) who is in the U.S. on a student visa wants to get married to a U.S. citizen. After marriage is it legal for her to enter the U.S. on the same student visa? (as she is halfway through her studies), and should the boy inform the U.S. embassy in India about his marriage?

Congratulations of the upcoming marriage of your niece! If she plans to continue her studies in the U.S. after her marriage, she may use her valid student visa to enter the United States.

A U.S. citizen is not required to inform the U.S. Consulate or Embassy about his/her marriage, even if he/she gets married in India. However, the Indian government may require that a U.S. citizen submit a letter from the Consulate to the Marriage Registrar before the U.S. citizen is able to get married in India. The Consulate's American Citizen Services (ACS) Unit is able to provide these letters upon request.

More information for American citizens wishing to marry in India is available at <http://chennai.usconsulate.gov/marriageinindia.html>.